

Missouri State Archives

Finding Aid [998.105]

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

St. Louis 1904 World's Fair Photograph Books

Abstract: Two incomplete copies and one complete of a book of published photographs of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

Extent: 3 volumes

Physical Description: Bound books

Location: Missouri State Archives; Stacks

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Alternative Formats: None

Access Restrictions: Fragile; handle with care

Publication Restrictions: None

Preferred Citation: Stevens, Walter B. The World's Fair: Comprising the Official Photographic Views of the Universal Exposition Held in Saint Louis, 1904 Art Edition [or Library Edition] c1904; Record Group 998.105; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

Acquisition Information: Gift; Accession #1983-0061

Processing Information: Processing and notes begun by LJ. Completed by EW on 12/15/2016. Updated by EW on 03/23/2021 and 12/10/2021.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Preparation for the St. Louis World's Fair began in January 1899 when St. Louis was chosen as the next city after Chicago to host a world's fair. Former Gov. David R. Francis was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee planning the fair. Other Committee members from Missouri were John Perry (Kansas City), E.W. Stephens (Columbia) and Howard Elliott (St. Louis). Soon Walter B. Stevens would become Secretary and his name appears on many of the St. Louis World's Fair documents.

The theme of the Fair was to be the 100th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase and a goal of Winter 1903 was set for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition opening. Eventually, the opening was shifted to April 1904. The Fair remained open until December 1, 1904.

George Kessler was the Fair's primary designer and his plan required approximately 1,200 acres of land and water in the area that would later become Forest Park and Washington University in St. Louis. Architects included Isaac S. Taylor, Emmanuel Louis Masqueray, Paul J. Pelz and many others.

Participants from all over the country and the world were recruited to design and build exhibits and buildings representing their native lands and cultures. Forty-three (of 45) states built exhibit space as well as 50 countries. Native peoples from across the world were brought to St. Louis where they would be required to appear in their native clothing and accouterments for the attendees to observe. Photographs of these native groups make up the bulk of the images in this manuscript. William H. Rau was the official photographer for the Fair and he is likely the individual who took the photographs featured in this book. Overall, almost 20 million people attended the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Related Collections

MS193 St. Louis 1904 World's Fair Photograph Books
MS207 Early Postcards of St. Louis
MS249 Beauty of the World's Fair and St. Louis 1904 Photograph Booklet
MS270 The Universal Exposition Book
MS279 George Kessler Papers
MS305 Meet Me At the Fair
MS393 Early Photo Album
MS398 Missouri Postcard Collection
MS513 John Schwob 1904 World's Fair Photograph Collection
RG550 General Assembly

Available in the Archives Reference Book Collection:

Bennitt, Mark. History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition: Comprising the History of the Louisiana Territory, the Story of the Louisiana Purchase and a Full Account of the Great Exposition, Embracing the Participation of the States and Nations of the World, and Other Events of the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904. St. Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905. Call #R 917.78 B4399.

Clevenger, Martha. "Indescribably Grand:" Diaries and Letters from the 1904 World's Fair. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1996. Call #R 907.4778 In222.

Fox, Timothy J. and Duane R. Sneddeker. From the Palaces to the Pike: Visions of the 1904 World's Fair. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1997. Call #R 907.4778 F8301.

Francis, David Rowland. The Universal Exposition of 1904. St. Louis: Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company, 1913. Call #R 917.78 F8471.

Hanson, John Wesley. The Official History of the Fair, St. Louis, 1904: The Sights and Scenes of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. 1904. Call #R 917.78 H1986.

Harper, Christine Froeichtenigt. The Water Wizard: John F. Wixford and the Purification of the St. Louis Water Supply in 1904. Ph.D. Dissertation: St. Louis University, 2001. Call #R 628.1 H231.

Kurtz, Charles M. The Saint Louis World's Fair of 1904, in Commemoration of the Acquisition of the Louisiana Territory: A Handbook of General Information Profusely Illustrated. St. Louis: Gottschalk Printing Company, 1903. Call #R 917.78 K9673.

Matthews, George R. America's First Olympics: The St. Louis Games of 1904. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005. Call #R 796.48 M4321.

Additional External Resources

Boone County Historical Society's postcard collection of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition / World's Fair is online through Missouri Digital Heritage:
<http://cdm16795.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/bchspsterds>.

The Library of Congress has nearly 1,000 photographs and other records on the World's Fair:
<https://www.loc.gov/>.

The Missouri History Museum in St. Louis has extensive collections devoted solely or partly to the World's Fair. In particular, see collection [#A0934 Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company Records, 1898-1925](#) and [#A0816 George E. Kessler Papers, 1886-1923](#). [NOTE: The Archives has the Kessler papers on microfilm, manuscript collection MS279.] They have also digitized both volumes of David R. Francis's The Universal Exposition of 1904 and placed them on Missouri Digital Heritage:
<http://cdm16795.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/expo>.

The St. Louis Art Museum's Cass Gilbert's Palace of Fine Arts collection is online through Missouri Digital Heritage:
<http://cdm16795.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/cgilbert>.

The State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia has many collections involving the Exposition. In particular, see collections [#C0806](#), [#C4123](#), [#P0093](#), [#C0051](#), [#C1228](#), [#S0085](#) and an [online photograph collection](#).

Washington University Library's World's Fair Collection contains four linear feet of records:
<http://archon.wulib.wustl.edu/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=489>.

ST. LOUIS 1904 WORLD'S FAIR PHOTOGRAPH BOOK, c1904

Arrangement: N/a

Scope and Content

These are two unbound incomplete copies of The World's Fair: Comprising the Official Photographic Views of the Universal Exposition Held in Saint Louis, 1904 Art Edition by Walter B. Stevens and photographs by William H. Rau. These are the art editions published by N.D. Thompson Publishing Company priced at \$4.75. Both copies are incomplete and missing pages. They are in fragile condition. Pages are landscape and measure 13" x 10 ¾". See MS193 for a complete copy of this book as well as a very similar publication called The Forest City.

Also includes one copy with the same title, except this one is called Library Edition instead of Art Edition. The Library Edition is available digitally through the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/worldsfair00louia>.

Container List

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	OB5A	none	Art Edition Copy #1, missing pp. title, 1-4, 289-290, 301-302 and index	c1904
	OB5B	none	Art Edition Copy #2, missing pp. title, 1-6, 13-14, 257-260, 269-270, 287-302 and index	c1904
	OB42	none	Library Edition (complete); 302 pages and index	c1904